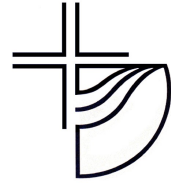


# News from the Brick

Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren  
5352 N. Brick Church Road  
Hagerstown, IN 47346

Established 1820



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Jodi Johnson, Secretary  
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.  
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

August  
2006

*Continuing the Work of Jesus.  
Peacefully. Simply. Together.*

## Carol's Comments

### "Faith on a Shoestring"

Luke 14: 27-34 *The Message: One day when large groups of people were walking along with him, Jesus turned and told them, "Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one's own self!—can't be my disciple. Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple. Is there anyone who, planning to build a new house, doesn't first sit down and figure the cost so you'll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you're going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: 'He started something he couldn't finish.' ...Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can't be my disciple. Salt is excellent. But if the salt goes flat, it's useless, good for nothing. Are you listening to this? Really listening?"*

You've all heard the phrase "living on a shoestring" meaning one is living on a tight budget...not spending much. Or you may have heard the phrase "theater on a shoestring" using the barest props and not having much to spend for the production of the play. Well, I got to thinking about how many of us practice faith that way and say, "I'm living my faith on a shoestring" meaning **having a "saying faith"** rather than **living a "saving faith."** We wouldn't want to admit it, of course.

What would that mean? "Faith on a shoestring?" We probably wouldn't even want to admit that the faith we display is hanging by a thread or shoestring. A "saying" faith is not much faith. It's more or less just "talking the talk" rather than "walking the walk." A "saving faith" is a faith lived out. What would "faith on a shoestring" look like?

I think "faith on a shoestring" would be minimal belief. I think we wouldn't venture to explore faith for fear of what we might learn about God or our commitment and even ourselves. I think it would mean minimal commitment to Christ and the church. Faith on a shoestring would mean we don't participate in the life of the church any more than we want to or have to. We are salt that has gone flat. We don't delve into the scriptures except what we might be exposed to on Sunday in Sunday School or worship service. We don't pray in public or with someone else, because, after all, we're on a shoestring and we wouldn't want to embarrass ourselves since we think prayer has to be flowery or well-phrased.

Faith on a shoestring would mean that we have a number of members on the church roll who aren't taking their baptismal vows seriously...those vows that say (a) we believe that Jesus is God's son and that he brought to earth a saving gospel...that (b) we will willingly turn from sin and, with God's help, seek to live according to the example and teaching of Jesus Christ...that (c) we will give of ourselves to the Church and

